

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
October 24, 2006**

7:00 p.m. Meeting called to order.

Attendance: Karl Haglund, Chair; Andrew McClurg; Jennifer Fallon; Sami Baghdady; Andrew Rojas; Jay Szklut, Staff; Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff

Minutes of September 25, October 10, and October 18 were approved.

**7:05 PUBLIC HEARING: CITIZEN'S PETITION TO REZONE 3 PARCELS ON TRAPELO ROAD
FROM GENERAL RESIDENCE TO LOCAL BUSINESS III**

Dr. Leo diNatale, owner of property at 334 Trapelo Road explained his rationale for submitting this proposed zoning amendment. His property is a three story building that has an office on the first floor, a residence on the second floor, and a vacant third floor, formerly combined with the second floor into a single residence. He believes he should be allowed to create a separate residence on the third floor. Because the property is in a GR District, 3-family structures are prohibited. The ZBA has denied a special permit as they consider three uses the equivalent of three family. Under LBIII zoning, three family structures are allowed and Mr. diNatale therefore proposes to extend the LBIII zone to include his and the properties abutting his property. He submitted a petition signed by many of his neighbors in support of the amendment.

One of the properties that would be affected by the rezoning is a three family condominium. An occupant of one of those condo's stated that he supported what Dr. diNatale wanted to do but he was concerned that by changing the zoning, the diNatale building could at some point become a commercial building. He did not approve of having a commercial building next to the condominium building.

After several minutes of discussion, it was clear that the Board supported Dr. diNatale's hope of converting his building by adding a residence to the third floor, but was not comfortable that a rezone protected the residential quality of the area.

Motion by Fallon to recommend favorable action on the amendment.

Second by Rojas

**The vote was split 2 - 2 with one abstention. (Fallon and Rojas in favor,
Haglund and McClurg opposed, Baghdady abstained)**

The Board took no action on the article.

**7:35 CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING: SITE PLAN REVIEW - PROPOSED SENIOR CENTER
BUILDING**

A motion to waive the reading of the public notice was accepted by the Board.

The Senior Center building committee presented revised plans. The plans included some decrease in building footprint. Also, the committee had negotiated an additional 10 parking spaces to be created by moving the around the Town Field to allow parking on that side of Beech Street. The Recreation Commission had agreed to give up the property and the Board of

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Selectmen voted to provide the resources necessary to insure construction of the parking. The Board expressed their appreciation of the effort by the building committee to address the parking concerns and requested that a plan be provided showing the site with the additional parking.

There was some discussion on the rear planting strip and whether it could be widened to accommodate plantings to shield abutting properties from headlights of cars. The committee agreed to investigate potential ways of addressing this concern.

There was also some discussion on final location of dumpster and fencing of dumpster to address neighbor's concerns.

Motion by Fallon to continue the hearing to November 14 @ 7:30

Second by Baghdady

Approved Unanimously

8:35 Discussion - Concord Avenue Planning

Residents of the Concord Avenue area near the former Sandler Skate shop appeared before the Board to discuss their concerns with the future of their segment of the Town and to initiate a planning effort to shape that future. Residents noted that two substantial properties, the former Skate Shop and the Purecoat properties could have major impacts on the Town and their neighborhood if redeveloped. They felt it important to begin to look at current zoning and potential zoning changes to insure appropriate redevelopment. Andy McClurg thought it important that the neighborhood begin with a shared vision. Jay noted that such a vision must also incorporate broader Town wide interests. The Board supported beginning a planning process for the area and directed staff to work with the neighbors to initiate the process.

9:20 Discussion - Belmont Center Planning Group

Postponed to November 28 meeting

9:20 PUBLIC HEARING: Zoning Amendment - Rezone Split-Lot at 475 Belmont Street to Local Business III

This parcel was omitted from the Annual Town Meeting Warrant article due to a technicality. There has been no objection raised from the property owner or any abutters.

Motion by McClurg to recommend favorable action on the amendment.

Second by Fallon

Approved Unanimously

9:25 CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING: CUSHING SQUARE OVERLAY DISTRICT ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT

A motion to waive the reading of the public notice was adopted by the Board.

Chris McVay, Consultant, joined the Board in discussion. She presented a letter from Peter Boyajian, a business owner in the Square, in support of the amendment.

Sue Bass questioned the 0 foot front setback requirement. She noted that the Winter's Hardware Building was set back 10 feet creating a wider sidewalk.

Jeffrey corrected her noting that the Winter's hardware was actually on the property line. It just so happened that the public right of way was wider at that location. Karl also noted that current planning practice strongly encourages zero setbacks to encourage vitality and pedestrian activity. There is no disagreement that wider sidewalks should be encouraged and the Planning Board could encourage that by waiving the setback at appropriate locations.

Sue also, again expressed concern with an FAR of 3.0.

After some discussion, an FAR of 2.75 was approved for three story buildings constructed on large (>15,000 square foot lots).

Nancy Marsh was concerned that 4 stories was too high.

The Board again noted that 4 stories is only considered under special circumstances and even then only allowed through special permit.

Chris Starr acknowledged that the proposed amendment will encourage changes to the Square. But that these changes are a benefit to the Town and to the extent possible will not negatively affect the residences around the Square.

Don Becker, speaking on behalf of himself and two neighbors voiced strong support for the amendment and thanked the Board for its effort and willingness to listen to concerns of the neighbors.

Motion by Baghdady to close the public hearing

Second by Rojas

Approved Unanimously (4:0, McClurg not eligible to vote)

Motion by Rojas to recommend favorable action on the amendment.

Second by Baghdady

Approved Unanimously (4:0, McClurg not eligible to vote)

10:30 PUBLIC HEARING: ZONE 6 McLEAN ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

Jeffrey reported that after consultation with Town Counsel that there was no need to amend the map. The Board therefore voted to dismiss this Amendment.

10:35 CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING: ZONE 6 McLEAN ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT

The hearing was opened and there were no comments from the public.

Motion by Fallon to recommend favorable action on the amendment.

Second by Rojas

Approved Unanimously (4:0, McClurg not eligible to vote)

**10:40 CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING: ZONING AMENDMENT - SIZE & HEIGHT OF FREE
STANDING SIGNS IN LBI AND LBIII DISTRICTS**

The hearing was opened and there were no comments from the public.

**Motion by Fallon to recommend favorable action on the amendment.
Second by Baghdady
Approved Unanimously**

10:45 Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: Monday, November 13, 2006
Belmont High School, Auditorium
Following Close of Town Meeting

Unanimously Approved 11/14/06